Preface

The literary environment of Tamil Nadu in the 1950s became congenial for the arrival of new fictionists like Sundara Ramaswamy, Jayakanthan, Akilan, Na. Parthasarathy and Indira Parthasarathy. They were shaped by the translations of Russian and French fiction. Sundara Ramaswamy had a massive exposure to Russian classics through translations and limited access to French fiction. His literary guru, Pudumaipittan, had already given Tamil readers a foretaste of Guy de Maupassant’s fiction whose world is grounded in the reality of earthly life.

The stories of Sundara Ramaswamy like those of Maupassant, address worldly concerns. These two writers are more oriented towards accepting realities of life rather than ideals of life hereafter. So there has been occasion for focussing on the materiality of their literary realms. How Sundara Ramaswamy’s materiality in its different dimensions differs is sought to be pinpointed. The spectrum of morality is seen to involve religious, social and cultural do’s and don’ts, but both the writers are seen to transcend the mediated codes confined to communal or religious terms. These writers take morality to a higher realm where basic human values alone matter. Their characters emerge from situations of irony presenting interesting parallels.
Their views on the ironies of life and their viewpoints on the co-existence of irreconcilable realities of life too converge providing matter for reflection and material for this study.

The main purpose of this comparative study is to gain wider recognition for the regional writer who rises to the stature of a globally renowned litterateur like Maupassant. A study of Maupassant’s stories has not been done in Tamil Nadu before from a comparatist’s angle. The study also seeks to reveal the relevance of the nineteenth-century French writer to the readers of the twenty-first century.

I thank God Almighty for His immense and eternal blessings all through this work.

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